

Alma 7:7*One thing more important*

- 1 The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven: and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.

Joseph Smith, *Teachings*, 121.

- 2 Truth, glorious truth, proclaims there is...a Mediator.... Through Him mercy can be fully extended to each of us without offending the eternal law of justice. This truth is the very root of Christian doctrine. You may know much about the gospel as it branches out from there, but if you only know the branches and those branches do not touch that root, if they have been cut free from that truth, there will be no life nor substance nor redemption in them.

Boyd K. Packer, *Conference Report*, April 1977, p. 80.

Alma 7:10

- 3 *Born...at Jerusalem*

There is no conflict or contradiction in the Book of Mormon with any truth recorded in the Bible. A careful reading of what Alma said will show that he had no intention of declaring that Jesus would be born *in* Jerusalem. Alma knew better. So did Joseph Smith and those who were associated with him in the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon. Had Alma said "born *in* Jerusalem, the city of our fathers," it would have made all the difference in the world. Then we would have said he made an error. Alma made no mistake, and what he said was true.

Dr. Hugh Nibley, in his course of study for the priesthood for 1957, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, in Lesson 8, Page 85, has this to say on this point:

"... One of the favorite points of attack on the Book of Mormon has been the statement in Alma 7:10 that the Savior would be born "at Jerusalem which is the *land* of our forefathers." Here Jerusalem is not the city "in the land of our forefathers," it *is* the land. Christ was born in a village some six miles from the city of Jerusalem; it was not in the city, but it was in what we now know the ancients themselves designated as "the land of Jerusalem." Such a neat test of authenticity is not often found in ancient documents.'...

... [Alma] did not say that the Lord would be born *in* Jerusalem. The preposition 'at' has several meanings. The *Standard Dictionary* lists the following: "of a point in space; on; upon; close to; by; near; within.... When we think merely of the local or geographical point, we use at; when we think of inclusive space, we employ in."

Alma was thinking of a geographical point, therefore he spoke properly according to the usage of language even in our own day when he said, "at Jerusalem, *the land of our forefathers*," Jerusalem being the central point of the land of their fathers.

Joseph Fielding Smith *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1:174-75.

Alma 7:10

- 4 *Mary*

She was foreordained. There is only one Mary, even as there is only one Christ. We may suppose that she was more highly endowed spiritually than any of her mortal sisters, but with it all, she was a mortal, not a God. Her mission was to bring the Son of God into the world, not to redeem mankind, not to intercede for them. She was destined to be a mother, not a mediator; hers was the blessed privilege, being mortal, to bring into the world Him by whom immortality should come. And blessed is she forever!

Bruce R. McConkie, *Promised Messiah*, p. 466

5 Can we speak too highly of her whom the Lord has blessed above all women? There was only one Christ, and there is only one Mary. Each was noble and great.... We cannot but think that the Father would choose the greatest female spirit to be the mother of his Son.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 1:326-27, n.4

Alma 7:10

6 *Conceive by the Power of Holy Ghost*

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "I believe firmly that Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh. He taught this doctrine to his disciples. He did not teach them that he was the Son of the Holy Ghost, but the Son of the Father. Truly, all things are done by the power of the Holy Ghost. It was through this power that Jesus was brought into this world, but not as the Son of the Holy Ghost, but the Son of God. Jesus is greater than the Holy Spirit, which is subject unto him, but his Father is greater than he! He has said it. Christ was begotten of God. He was not born without the aid of Man, and that Man was God!

Doctrines of Salvation, 1:18.

7 Jesus is the Son of God, not of the Holy Ghost.... Alma perfectly describes our Lord's conception and birth by prophesying: Christ "shall be born of Mary... who shall be overshadowed and *conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost*, and bring forth a son, yea, even the *Son of God*." (Alma 7:10). Nephi spoke similarly when he said that at the time of her conception, Mary "was carried away in the Spirit".

Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1:82-83; emphasis in original.

8 Alma 7:11-12

C. S. Lewis also wrote: "A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is.... You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down".

Mere Christianity, New York, Macmillan, 1960, 124; quoted in James E. Faust, *Ensign*, November 1987, 15.

9 The Savior knows what it's like to die from cancer.

Neal A. Maxwell, *Even As I Am*, pp. 116-117.

10 "He [Christ] showed condescension when he chose to suffer, not only for our sins, but for the infirmities, sicknesses, and illnesses of mankind. But the agonies of the Atonement were infinite and firsthand! Since not all human sorrow and pain is connected to sin, the full intensiveness of the Atonement involved bearing our pains, infirmities, and sicknesses, as well as our sins."

Neal A. Maxwell, (*Doctrines of the Book of Mormon*, 1991 Sperry Symposium, p. 87)

11 "Jesus knows and understands when we are stressed and perplexed. The complete consecration which effected the Atonement insured Jesus' perfect empathy; He felt our very pains and afflictions before we did and knows how to succor us."

Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, p. 24.

12 "To succor means to 'run to.' I testify that in my fears and in my infirmities the Savior has surely run to me. I will never be able to thank Him enough for such personal kindness and such loving care."

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, p. 66.

13 "The immediate consequence of sin is withdrawal of the Spirit (see Alma 34:35). It may be that such a withdrawal from an individual is what leads to feelings of guilt and pain and emptiness. Jesus Christ, in taking upon him the effects of the sins of all mankind, was thus exposed to the awful (and to Jesus, unusual) withdrawal of that

Spirit which had been his constant companion from the beginning." (Robert L. Millet, *Life of Christ*, p. 68.) President Brigham Young explained: "The Father withdrew His Spirit from His Son, at the time he was to be crucified.... At the very moment, at the hour when the crisis came for him to offer up his life, the Father withdrew Himself, withdrew His Spirit.... That is what made him sweat blood. If he had had the power of God upon him, he would not have sweat blood." (JD 3:206.)

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987-1992], 3:53

14 **Condescension of Christ**

1. The circumstances of his birth, the status with which he came into the world and the manner in which it was announced all showed great condescension on his part.
2. He showed condescension in his choice of associations while on earth.
3. He showed condescension in his patience and restraint when brought before men for judgment.
4. He showed condescension in his suffering for our sins.
5. He showed condescension when he chose to suffer, not only for our sins, but for the infirmities, sicknesses, and illnesses of mankind.

Gerald N. Lund, *Selected writings of Gerald N. Lund: Gospel Scholars Series* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co. 1999], 164-165

15

For many years I thought of the Saviors experience in the garden and on the cross as places where a large mass of sin was heaped upon Him. Through the words of Alma, Abinadi, Isaiah, and other prophets, however, my view has changed. Instead of an impersonal mass of sin, there was a long line of people, as Jesus felt "our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15), "[bore] our griefs...carried our sorrows... [and] was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:4-5).

The Atonement was an intimate, personal experience in which Jesus came to know how to help each of us.

The Pearl of Great Price teaches that Moses was shown all the inhabitants of the earth, which were "numberless as the sand upon the sea shore" (Moses 1:28). If Moses beheld every soul, then it seems reasonable that the Creator of the universe has the power to become intimately acquainted with each of us. He learned about your weaknesses and mine. He experienced your pains and sufferings. He experienced mine. I testify that He knows us. He understands the way in which we deal with temptations. He knows our weaknesses. But more than that, more than just knowing us, He knows how to help us if we come to Him in faith.

Merrill J. Bateman, *Ensign*, Nov. 2005 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005], 75-76

16

I testify that the Savior's Atonement lifts from us not only the burden of our sins but also the burden of our disappointments and sorrows, our heartaches and our despair....

If you are lonely, please know you can find comfort. If you are discouraged, please know you can find hope. If you are poor in spirit, please know you can be strengthened. If you feel you are broken, please know you can be mended.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, May 2006 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006], 70-71

17

The Savior's plunge into humanity was not a toe-dipping experience. It was a total immersion. He did not experience some pains and not others. His life was not a random sampling, a spot audit; it was a total confrontation with and internalization of every human experience, every human plight, every human trial. Somehow his sponge alone would absorb the entire ocean of human affliction, weakness, and suffering. For this descent he would fully bare his human breast. There would be no godly powers exercised that would shield him from one scintilla of human pain....

Christ's Atonement was a descent into the seemingly "bottomless pit" of human agony. He took upon himself the sins of the most wretched of all sinners; he descended beneath the cruelest tortures devised by man. His

downward journey encompassed the transgressions of those who ignorantly sinned; it incorporated that quantum of suffering unrelated to spiritual error, but nonetheless viably acute in stinging proportions—the agony of loneliness, the pain of inadequacy, the suffering of infirmities and sickness. In the course of his divine descent he was assaulted with every temptation inflicted on the human race.

After our futile attempts to explain the awesome depths of the “terrible trip,” we come back again to those simple but expressive words of the scriptures. “He descended below all things : (D&C 88:6).

Tad R. Callister, *Infinite Atonement*, pp. 96-97

18

Can we even in the depths of disease, tell Him anything at all about suffering? In ways we cannot comprehend, our sicknesses and infirmities were borne by Him even before they were borne by us. The very weight of our combined sins caused Him to descend below all. We have never been, nor will we be, in depths such as He has known. Thus His atonement made perfect His empathy and His mercy and His capacity to succor us, for which we can be everlastingly grateful as He tutors us in our trials. There was no ram in the thicket at Calvary to spare Him, this Friend of Abraham and Isaac.

Can those who yearn for hearth or home instruct Him as to what it is like to be homeless or on the move? Did He not say in a disclosing moment that “the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head”?

Can we really counsel Him about be misrepresented, misunderstood, or betrayed? Or what it is like when even friends falter or “go a fishing”?

Can we educate Him regarding injustice or compare failures of judicial systems with the Giver of the Law, who knew what perfect justice was, yet in divine dignity endured its substantive and procedural perversion?

And when we feel so alone, can we presume to teach Him who trod “the wine-press alone” anything at all about feeling forsaken?

Cannot the childless who crave children count on His empathy? For He loved children and said, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.” He wept, and ... one by one, [He] blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them. And when he had done this he wept again.”

Do we presume to instruct Him in either compassion or Mercy? Even at the apogee of His agony upon the cross, He, in selfless love, consoled a thief beside Him, saying “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

Can we excuse our compromises because of the powerful temptations of status seeking? It was He who displayed incredible integrity as the adversary made Him an offer that could not be refused—“all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.” But He refused!

Can we teach Him about meekness while enduring irony? His remaining possession, a cloak, was gambled for even as He died. Yet the very earth was His footstool! Jesus gave mankind living water so that we shall never thirst again, yet on the cross He was given vinegar.

Can we lecture Him on liberty, He who sets us free from our last enemies—sin and death?

Can those who revere human freedom yet complain about human suffering ever achieve real reconciliation except through His gospel?

Can those concerned with nourishing the poor advise Him concerning feeding the multitudes?

Can those who are concerned with medicine instruct Him about healing the sick?

Or can we inform the Atoner about feeling the sting of ingratitude when one’s service goes unappreciated or unnoticed? Only one leper in ten thanked Jesus, who asked searchingly, “But where are the nine?”

Should those concerned with lengthening the life span offer to enlighten the Resurrector of all mankind?

Neal A. Maxwell, *Even As I Am* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 116

19 Alma 7:13

That he might take upon him the sins of his people

In a way that we cannot comprehend, Jesus of Nazareth assumed the burden and consequence of the sins of all mankind. "The immediate consequence of sin is withdrawal of the Spirit (see Alma 34:35). It may be that such a withdrawal from an individual is what leads to feelings of guilt and pain and emptiness. Jesus Christ, in taking upon him the effects of the sins of all mankind, was thus exposed to the awful (and to Jesus, unusual) withdrawal of that Spirit which had been his constant companion from the beginning." (Robert L. Millett, *Life in Christ*, p. 68.) President Brigham Young explained: "The Father withdrew His Spirit from His Son, at the time he was to be crucified.... At the very moment, at the hour when the crisis came for him to offer up his life, the Father withdrew Himself, withdrew His Spirit.... That is what made him sweat blood. If he had had the power of God upon him, he would not have sweat blood." (JD 3:206)

Millett & McConkie, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol 3, p.53

20 Alma 7:13

Repentance required for blotting out of sins

At the gate of heaven, Christ, the King of kings, waits for us with open arms. He awaits not only to certify us, but also to bestow a Shepherd's divine affection upon His sheep as we come Home. The reality that, if we are worthy, we should one day be so warmly received by the Lord of lords and King of kings is marvelous beyond comprehension!

Yet He cannot full receive us until we fully follow Him. His love for us is unconditional and perfect, but ours for Him is clearly not. Being just, He cannot deviate from His standards by giving us blessings without our obedience to the laws upon which such blessings are predicated. His devotion to truth is such that even in His mercy, He cannot lie, including to Himself, about our readiness. He knows our weaknesses, but, mercifully, He also knows how to succor us as we seek to cope with them. And whatever weaknesses remain in us, He will tutor us and train us to exculpate these, if we will but let Him.

Neal A. Maxwell, *Even As I Am* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], 33-34

21 President George Albert Smith declared, "When we possess the Spirit of the Lord we always have the spirit of repentance. Whenever our hearts are hard and we can't repent, we may know that we have not a proper spirit"

The Teachings of George Albert Smith, ed. Robert and Susan McIntosh [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 86.

22 We may know that the Holy Ghost is with us when our sensitivity to sin, and fervency in doing something about it, increases. "A sensitive conscience is the evidence of a healthy spirit."

Keith B. McMullin, "Welcome Home," *Ensign*, May 1999, 80.

23 While serving my first mission, my companion and I were privileged to teach the Tony and Norma Johnson family of Ellesmere Port, England. As part of a missionary discussion, we taught that a truly repentant person would want to confess all his wrong-doings to the Lord in prayer, that a vague blanket confession was inadequate because an individual should confess his sins in some clarity.

When we returned three days later, Tony Johnson looked terrible. Upon inquiring, we learned he had not slept for three nights. He indicated he would finish one prayer, get into bed, then remember some other event or thought that he felt should be part of his confession. He then would get out of bed and ask forgiveness for another wrongdoing.

While I realized Tony's depth of feeling was unusual, I left our meeting that evening knowing I had never spent three nights on my knees asking for forgiveness. I had never approached that level of brokenheartedness and contriteness that repentance sometime requires. I didn't sleep well during the next few nights.

Monte J Brough, "Living the Law of Sacrifice," *Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 46

Alma 7:14

24 To gain salvation in the celestial kingdom men must be *born again* (Alma 7:14; born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:3-13); born of God, so that they are changed from their “carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness,” becoming new creatures of the Holy Ghost. (Mosiah 37:24-29.) They must become newborn babes in Christ (1 Peter 2:2); they must be “spiritually begotten” of God, be born of Christ, Thus becoming his sons and daughters. (Mosiah 5:7.)

The first birth takes place when spirits pass from their pre-existent First estate into mortality; the second birth or birth “into the kingdom of heaven” takes place when mortal men are born again and become alive to the things of the Spirit and of righteousness. The elements of water, blood, and Spirit are present in both births. (Moses 6:59-60.) The second birth begins when men are baptized in water by a legal administrator; it is completed when they actually receive the companionship of the Holy Ghost, becoming new creatures by the cleansing power of that member of the Godhead.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 100-101

Alma 7:19-20

25 *Ability to perceive*

The gift of discernment is essential to the leadership of the Church.... Every member in the restored Church of Christ could have the gift if he willed to do so.... With this gift they would be able to detect something of the disloyal, rebellious, and sinister influences.

Stephen L. Richards, in Conference Report, April 1950, 163.

Alma 7:20

26 *One eternal round*

The divine delight in what seems to us to be mere repetition is one clue to the sublime character of God. Since we must, at times, accept what appears to us to be routine, repeated experiences, we too, if we try, can find fresh meaning and fresh joy in the repeated experiences. God’s course is one eternal round but it is not one monotonous round. God is never bored, for one who has perfect love is never bored. There is always so much to notice, so much to do, so many ways to help, so many possibilities to pursue.

Neal A Maxwell, *A More Excellent Way* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969], 84-85

27 His *character* fits a pattern. He was the same God before the earth was created that he now is. From everlasting to everlasting, he is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness. With him there is no variableness; he changes not; neither doth he walk in crooked paths; and his course is one eternal round. He is a God of truth; he cannot lie; his word endureth to all generations. He is no respecter of persons, and that man only is blessed who keeps his commandments. And his is love.

Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978], 197-198

Alma 7:21

28 *How does it feel to be unclean*

I remember my father awakening me one cold night in early February when I was about sixteen. I remember feeling startled; I had only been asleep about an hour. He explained that a steer from our small farm had gotten through the fence, wandered onto the highway, and been hit by a truck. The animal was dead, and to save the meat we would have to act quickly. The task ahead would prove to be an experience I could never forget.

After we dragged the steer from the road to an open shed with our old tractor, our next task was to hoist the animal up. We tied its hind feet together and then threw the rope over a beam. I remember struggling to get my arms under the animal’s hindquarters and lift as my father pulled. To lift with any effect required wrapping my whole

body around the slippery animal. By the time the body was hung, the mud and stench had become ingrained in my clothes. I felt miserable, but our work had only begun.

Together my father and I cleaned the dead animal. We didn't finish until about three in the morning. The smell, the slime, the dirt, and the filth clung to me.

I went back to the house. Although it has been twenty-five years, the events of the next hour are very vivid in my mind. I remember clearly the satisfaction of removing my shirt. Peeling off each layer of clothing brought relief. I began washing—first my hands, then my arms to the elbows. It was not the kind of dirt that would disappear quickly. Then I showered, first washing the ears, then the hair, back to the hands and fingernails, and to the hair again. It was some time before I felt satisfied that the cleansing was done.

Slipping into a clean pair of pajamas, I lay awake in bed for a while reliving the experiences. It was four in the morning. I was exhausted, but the feelings of tiredness did not approach the sensational satisfaction of being washed and clean.

Yet as memorable as that experience was, there are wonderful feelings far surpassing the physical feelings I felt on that cold winter night. I speak of marvelous spiritual feelings that come through the gift of the Savior's atonement as the layers of sin are washed away and we come to feel spiritually clean,
Neil L. Anderson, "The Joy of Becoming Clean," *Ensign*, April 1995, p. 51

29 **Alma 7:22**
Walk after the Holy Order of God

The priesthood is very, very precious to the Lord. He is very careful about how it is conferred, and by whom. It is never done in secret.

I have told you how the *authority* is given to you. The *power* you receive will depend on what you do with this sacred unseen gift.

Your authority comes through your ordination; your power comes through obedience and worthiness.
Boyd K. Packer, Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 47; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 32.

30 **Alma 7:23**
Humility and Submission

"Humility is to joyfully, voluntarily and quietly submit one's whole life to God's will."
Alice T. Clark

31 Whereas the Senate of the United States, devoutly recognizing the supreme authority and just government of Almighty God in all the affairs of men and of nations, has by a resolution requested the President to designate and set apart a day for national prayer and humiliation:

And whereas, it is the duty of nations as well as men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God; to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations are only blessed whose God is the Lord:

And insomuch as we know that by his divine law nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people? We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown; but we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success,

we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us:

It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness:

Now, therefore, in compliance with the request, and fully concurring in the views, of the Senate, I do by this my proclamation designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer. And I do hereby request all the people to abstain on that day from their ordinary secular pursuits, and to unite at their several places of public worship and their respective homes in keeping the day holy to the Lord, and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion. All this being done in sincerity and truth, let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the divine teachings, that the united cry of the nation will be heard on high, and answered with blessings no less than the pardon of our national sins, and the restoration of our new divided and suffering country to its former happy condition of unity and peace.

Abraham Lincoln, "Proclamation for the National Fast Day", Aug. 12, 1861.

32 Alma 7:23

Gentle: easy to be entreated

"The intoxication of anger, like the grape, shows us to others but not to ourselves."

Caleb Colton

33 "God chooses humble men because He can handle them."

Wilford Woodruff

34 Alma 7:23

Patient and longsuffering

After that great First Vision, the Prophet Joseph Smith received no additional communication for three years. However, he did not wonder; he did not question; he did not doubt the Lord. He waited patiently. He taught us the heavenly virtue of **patience**—by example.

Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, Nov. 2005 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005], 68.

35 One does not usually leap ahead from one capacity level to a level much farther away; we usually develop patiently by making small adjustments, gradually increasing our capacity, building a solid foundation on the most simple principles of the gospel: "Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now, neither the ministering of angels; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected" (D&C 67:13).

We make spiritual progress through two means: our own agency and God's timetable. He does not always reveal his timetable. To possess some capacities, we wait on the Lord. We make a mistake if we think that by going into some kind of spiritual overdrive, we can suddenly assume great spiritual capacity or compel spiritual experience. Catherine Thomas; as quoted in *Studies in Scriptures*, ed. By Kent P. Jackson [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988], 8:277

36 As we were busily preparing for a Christmas dinner, my teenaged sister excitedly reached into the cupboard for the silver-lined china. The lovely... set had been Grandmother's wedding present to Mom and Dad and was used only on special occasions. But as my sister removed some of the precious plates from the cupboard, she bumped her arm and the china slipped from her hands. Her desperate attempts to recover the plates were in vain, and the crash of china shattering on the floor was as heartbreaking as the look of helpless horror on her face.

Mother's meal-preparing hands stopped in midair, and the festive chatter of a bustling household ceased as we all stood frozen in awful silence. Without turning around to see the damage, Mother quietly slipped out of the room. Then... the rest of us tried to resume the tempo of our holiday duties..

Except my sister. She stood motionless, a big tear trickling down her cheek. As another tear fell, she mechanically found the broom and dustpan and began sweeping up scattered chips. Then, on her knees, she slowly picked up the larger pieces and carefully placed them in the dustpan.

Within a few minutes Mother returned to the kitchen and wrapped her arms around her grieving daughter. My sister began to sob out loud.... Quietly [Mother] soothed, "That's all right, honey; people are more important than things."

Mother later told me that she had gone into the other room to pray and was blessed with a peaceful feeling and the inspiration of how to comfort my sister. The gift of spiritual perspective given to my mother that Christmas day became the most priceless gift our family received, as we children learned that we were more precious than fine china.

Laura Russell Bunker, *Ensign*, Dec. 1998 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998], 54-55.

37

Sometimes we fathers forget that once we too were boys, and boys at times can be vexing to parents.

I recall how much, as a youngster, I liked dogs. One day I took my wagon and placed a wood orange crate in it and went looking for dogs.... As I would find a dog and capture it, I placed it in the crate, took it home, locked it in the coal shed, and turned the latch on the door. That day I think I brought home six dogs.... I had no idea what I would do with all those dogs, so I didn't reveal my deed to anyone.

Dad came home from work and, as was his custom, took the cola bucket and went to the coal shed to fill it. Can you imagine his shock and utter consternation as he opened the door and immediately faced six dogs, all attempting to escape at once? As I recall, Dad flushed a little bit, and then he calmed down and quietly told me, "Tommy, coal sheds are for coal. Other people's dogs rightfully belong to them." By observing him, I learned a lesson in patience and calmness.

It is a good thing I did, for a similar event occurred in my life with our youngest son, Clark....

One day in his boyhood he came home from Provo Canyon with a water snake, which he named Herman.

Right off the bat Herman got lost. Sister Monson found him in the silverware drawer.... Well, Clark moved Herman to the bathtub, put a plug in the drain, put a little water in, and had a sign taped to the back of the tub which read, "Don't use this tub. It belongs to Herman." So we had to use the other bathroom while Herman occupied that sequestered place.

But then one day, to our amazement, Herman disappeared.... So the next day Sister Monson cleaned up the tub and prepared it for normal use....

One evening I decided it was time to take a leisurely bath, so I filled the tub with a lot of warm water, and then I peacefully lay down in the tub for a few moments of relaxation. I was lying there just pondering, when the soapy water reached the level of the overflow drain and began to flow through it. Can you imagine my surprise when with my eyes focused on that drain; Herman came swimming out, right at my face? I yelled out to my wife, "Frances! Here comes Herman!"

Well, Herman was captured again, put in a foolproof box, and we made a little excursion to Vivian Park in Provo Canyon and there released Herman into the beautiful waters of the South Fork Creek.

Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Oct. 2002 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002], 59-60.

38

Alma 7:23

Temperate in all things

Temperance suggests sobriety and self-restraint in action. It reminds one of covenants made....

Repeatedly, scriptures teach that we be "temperate in all things" (1Corinthians 9:25; Alma 7:23; 38:10; D&C 12:8). Temperance can protect each of us from the aftermath of excess"

Russell M. Nelson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 81; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 60.

39 Alma 7:23*Always returning thanks*

Gratitude is acknowledgement. *To feel gratitude is to know you are not alone.* To know that we are not alone in our trials and challenges and to realize that we are not alone in our triumphs and our successes. Gratitude is to know that someone else has rendered us assistance. When that gratitude is directed to our Father and to His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, we feel their divine love and invite a spirit of humility into our lives. Acknowledging God is humility. Gratitude and humility bring perspective to both our trials and our triumphs... As we gratefully acknowledge Him we maintain a spirit of humility and insulate ourselves from pride. *Gratitude and humility thus become a sanctifying cycle where each reinforces the other and helps us reach spiritual constancy.* (emphasis added)

Jana Hilton, "Gratitude Begets Humility, and Humility Begets Joy" BYU Women's Conference, May 4, 2006.

40 Alma 7:24*Good Works*

The best and most clear indicator that we are progressing spiritually and coming unto Christ is the way we treat each other.

Marvin J. Ashton

41

I don't want to drive up to the pearly gates in a shiny sports car, wearing beautifully tailored clothes, my hair expertly coiffed, and with long, perfectly manicured fingernails. I want to drive up in a station wagon that has mud on the wheels from taking kids to scout camp. I want to be there with grass stains on my shoes from mowing Sister Schenk's lawn. I want to be there with a smudge of peanut butter on my shirt from making sandwiches for a sick neighbor's children. I want to be there with a little dirt under my fingernails from helping to weed someone's garden. I want to be there with children's sticky kisses on my cheeks and the tears of a friend on my shoulder. I want the Lord to know I was really here and that I really lived.

Sister Marjorie Hinckley

42 Alma 7:25*Blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*

Abraham... Isaac, also and Jacob... have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods (D&C 132:37).